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mented through a problem-centered interdisciplinary Honors colloquium for juniors and seniors. Since it is the first of its kind to be proposed at the University of Illinois, specific comment will be deferred. But, in general, Honors colloquia are key points at which the all-university approach at Illinois has some major advantages. They can facilitate cooperation among the undergraduate professional colleges and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and can thereby add breadth to departmental or college sponsored programs. The College of Commerce and Business Administration, for example, is considering an Honors seminar in the behavioral sciences which should draw students from other colleges as well as Commerce students. A major advantage in locating Honors colloquia in professional colleges is the greater ease with which they can then become a part of the curricula of professional school Honors students.

The greatest unexplored opportunities for Honors work lie in the professional colleges. But Honors work can fall short of its potential in either professional or liberal arts colleges. The curriculum flexibility which it introduces can be wasted if there are no clearly articulated Honors objectives that press for high standards and high quality. With a clear sense of purpose, professional school Honors programs are in a position to utilize a strong tradition and to make a unique contribution. They should be best equipped to take a basic idea, such as the encouragement of excellence through Honors work, add to it an element of usefulness, and combine it with a quest for results guided by a clearly conceived set of values.

The Superior Student
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distinctive features of the university of wisconsin honors program*

Last year the faculty of the College of Letters and Science at the University of Wisconsin authorized its Honors Committee, under the chairmanship of Professor Alvin Whitley, to proceed with the implementation of a full, four-year Honors Program to begin for freshmen and sophomores in September, 1960, and for upperclassmen in September, 1961. In recommending the program, the Honors Committee made the following appeal directly to the citizens of Wisconsin:

"We believe the citizens of the State of Wisconsin will wish their State University to provide a suitably improved education for those of their sons and daughters with unusual talents. We feel that the attention given to such students has not been developed or maintained adequately as the general program of the College has been altered and improved in recent years. The senior faculty of the College has given more and more of its individual attention to its graduate

*From faculty reports. A program will be inaugurated next year on the Milwaukee campus under the chairmanship of Professor Herman Well.

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students. From them it may now have the satisfaction and sense of accomplishment it formerly had in working with the most gifted undergraduates. The latter appear to have been the chief victims of this change in emphasis. These superior undergraduates, in proportion much more our own Wisconsin people than are our graduate students, may be the most precious resources we have. They should not feel it necessary to go elsewhere to find the opportunity and challenge they deserve at home."

The faculty enabling legislation particularly provided that the program was not to begin unless sufficient funds were made available to cover all instructional and administrative costs necessary for a satisfactory program. In addition, in any year in which funds are not sufficient the Honors Committee is to report to the faculty and ask for advice. The Honors Committee now reports that it has been assured by the Administration that the program will be fully and specifically budgeted.

Each departmental chairman will include in his budget the specific cost of Honors work in his department. This amount will not be isolated from other items but will appear as a regular part of the budget and thus be subject to the usual budgetary negotiations.

Participating students will be selected from the upper five percent to ten percent of the undergraduates in the College. Students may apply for entry to the program on their own initiative or may be recommended by any faculty member during any semester of their undergraduate careers.

In order to receive Honors credit a student must be certified as an Honors candidate by the committee. Freshmen will be certified on the basis of academic scholarship awards, high school grades, test scores, recommendations and personal interviews. Other students will be certified when they qualify on the basis of their college work. Students may withdraw or be dropped from the program without prejudice.

The Honors Committee has been working with the departments to determine what courses and procedures should be made available for Honors students. For the coming year, twenty-nine departments have tentatively committed themselves to offering 118 semester courses. Thirty-four are new courses especially designed for Honors candidates, and others are separate sections of existing courses, special laboratory or discussion sections, or individual tutorials.

Departmental programs are scheduled to begin in 1961-62. Existing departmental opportunities for their superior majors will be strengthened and new procedures added. Insofar as possible Honors candidates will be grouped with departmental majors who excel in the particular field but whose excellence is not of sufficient breadth to qualify them as Honors candidates. Whenever the total number of such students in a given field is large enough, special seminars, colloquia and courses will be offered. For all upperclass Honors students there will be considerable independent work under professorial guidance, much flexibility in credits and hours, and a senior thesis, or its equivalent.

In addition, unusual opportunities for more advanced and intensive work by Honors students are available through the association of graduate students with undergraduates in upper level courses, and there is the possibility of admitting advanced undergraduates to graduate courses and seminars.

Students who at the end of their sophomore year are in good standing as Honors students, have successfully completed at least twenty credits of work under

Honors procedures, and are recommended by the Honors Committee will be awarded *Sophomore Honors*. This will make it possible to recognize superior work by students not proceeding to further study in the College of Letters and Science.

All students who have participated in Honors procedures will have all grades earned (or all courses taken) under such procedures given a special designation on their transcripts, and *all* transcripts will indicate that there are such special Honors procedures and Honors degrees.

issues in honors

by **Robert C. Angell**
Director, Honors Council
University of Michigan

The following is the text of the opening address delivered at the ICSS Western Invitational Conference in Berkeley, California, April 10, 1960.

My title assumes that the commitment to Honors work has already been made. There is, of course, the previous issue of whether Honors work should be done at all. There are still those who think that it is undemocratic to single out the best students for special attention, though oddly enough they don't seem to think it wrong to impose high standards for college admission. Their theory seems to be that it is all right to have a carefully chosen intellectual squad, but it is improper to have a first team. Interestingly, the doubt about the social justice of Honors work seems most frequent among the Honors students themselves. A dead-level theory of democracy—to me a mistaken theory—is giving them a guilty conscience.

SHOULD HONORS BEGIN WITH FRESHMEN?

The first of the five issues I should like to discuss is given by the question: Who should participate in Honors work? The answer to this question necessitates answers to three sub-questions, the first of which is: At what point in the academic career should an Honors program start? When we adopted our College Honors Program at Michigan in 1957 we decided to take in students as entering freshmen. Our experience of the last three years has made me appreciate the arguments against our policy as well as those supporting it.

One of the strongest reasons for starting with freshmen is that you avoid the possibility that your brightest students will find college work boring. Actually it was the criticism from superior upperclassmen that the first two years' work at Michigan was not challenging enough that, more than anything else, led to the establishment of the College Honors Program. There was evidence that such students sometimes turned to enterprises like the *Michigan Daily* to find intellectual adventure.

The main counter-argument is that one cannot do an accurate enough job of selection among entering freshmen to make the system work well. A good many are